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ABSTRACT

On October 22, 1998, Los Angeles City College's 70th anniversary, Dr. Mary Spangler was inaugurated as the 12th president of the college. In this, her message to faculty, staff, and family attending the event, Spangler revisits the college's past, citing historical highlights from each decade. She also focuses on the present state of the college, directing attention to its recognition by the Los Angeles Times as the only community college named in a recent article on college costs, listed with 18 major 4-year colleges and universities. With a population that is 14% African American, 21% Asian, 23% Caucasian, and 42% Hispanic, the 15,000 students at Los Angeles City College compose the most ethnically diverse community college in the country. Notable changes at present include organizational restructuring, block scheduling, workshops on hiring, strategic planning to prioritize needs, and program review. In looking at the college's future, Dr. Spangler cites "Vision for 2001," a declaration of commitment for cooperative learning established in 1996 at a college retreat to chart the direction for the next 5 years. Dr. Spangler's energies as president will focus on several key issues: expanding quality programs, improving the physical environment, decreasing dependence on state funds, and maintaining a sense of community. (AS)

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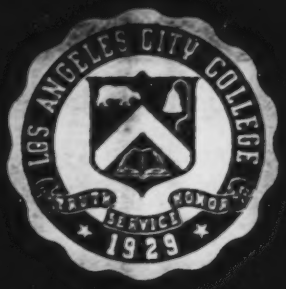

Presidential Inauguration

October 22, 1998

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Presidential Inauguration
October 22, 1998

A MESSAGE FROM

Dr. Mary Spangler

President, Los Angeles City College

President Garfield, Chancellor Heinselman;
elected officials, members of the community,
invited guests and colleagues;
faculty, staff, and students;
and most especially my family who are here today:

I am so pleased to welcome you all. Thank you for sharing with me my inauguration as the 12th president of Los Angeles City College. I extend sincere appreciation to the college and community representatives for their acknowledgements and greetings.

An inauguration is a traditional, symbolic event to formally vest authority and responsibility in the organization's leader. On the eve of the college's 70th birthday, this event provides the opportunity to look back at highlights in the institution's history, see where we are today, and direct our sights toward the college's continuing development into the first decade of the next century.

Let's first look at the past. Following its birth in 1929 with the relinquishing of the site by UCLA, Los Angeles Junior College—still part of the high school system—spent the economically challenging '30's establishing itself as a new educational venture, increasing enrollments, and building a solid reputation within the community. Its focus was a semi-professional, technical curriculum geared to skilled employment. In 1941 *Newsweek* described it as "one of the best terminal junior colleges" in the country.

During the war years of the early '40's, enrollments dropped dramatically only to rebound as dramatically after the war. The deluge of students who studied on the G.I. Bill were older, serious, and more worldly. Their broadened interest firmly established the transfer function alongside the career function of the previous decade.

The post-war "Fabulous '50's" were the "golden years" of consolidation and tranquility. The college began an ambitious eight-year construction program, tried its first experiment with educational television, and pioneered new programs for the disadvantaged.

Following the student activism of the late '50's, the system continued to evolve during the '60's. Additions included remedial work in basic skills, improved tutoring, increased student personnel services, new departments and courses, and a community services program. Student unrest rose to a three-day crescendo in March 1969. By the end of the decade, the college's ethnic make-up had changed significantly: one of every three students was African-American, one of seven was Asian, and one of ten was Hispanic.

Up to this time, City College students attended for transfer and career education; the majority were American-born and graduates of the American school system. The '70's and '80's were times of transition and change in all areas—from student body composition, to types of courses offered, from teaching methodologies to administration and financing. In 1969, with the founding of the Los Angeles Community College District and its separation from the LA Unified system, college autonomy was significantly reduced and decision-making was centralized, a trend we are currently reversing. Prop 13 ushered in financial challenges that have since become commonplace. The neighborhood surrounding the college also changed significantly while the college itself increasingly became an international one and began focusing attention on a host of special student populations. With the state-mandated student enrollment fee, enrollments once again declined.

This whirlwind review ends with the '90's, a decade faced with many of the same challenges. The physical infrastructure has only recently begun to be revitalized during my tenure. Funding mechanisms until this year have resulted in deficit spending. Accountability

has moved to the forefront in an information-driven computer age. And the college has had to see itself as a customer-oriented, learner-centered organization in a highly competitive environment, a different view from that of the original ivy-covered college.

During the last seventy years, nearly two million students have passed through this institution. We are proud of the fact that our students have made their mark on the City of Los Angeles through the leading roles they have in a wide variety of businesses and industries.

Focus for a few minutes with me on where we are now. In a recent article on "college costs," the *Los Angeles Times* recognized the icon we are by listing Los Angeles City College—the *only* community college named—with 18 major 4-year colleges and universities. With more than 15,000 students, we are the most ethnically diverse community college in the country. Our population is 14% African-American, 21% Asian, 23% Caucasian, and 42% Hispanic.

I am proud to have been selected president of this dynamic, urban college and the flagship institution of the district. I am also proud of how the college has developed during my 4 years on the campus. And we all—faculty, staff, managers, students, and supporters—are contributing to its progress.

I commend the faculty for their willingness to trust and work cooperatively with those of us charged with the responsibility of implementing and managing the changes. Notable changes include organizational restructuring, block scheduling, workshops on hiring, strategic planning to prioritize needs, and program review. I acknowledge faculty leadership in such areas as the creative "City of Angels" multicultural course, the new Dental Tech-nology facilities, the Upward Bound grant in Theatre Arts, the successful PACE program, the innovative Teaching/Learning Center, the City Prep Academy

for high school students, and our men's winning basketball team. The faculty's efforts have taken us from #7 among our sister colleges to #6 in productivity and from #4 in the district to #3 in efficiency in just one year! We grew 6% last year, producing the highest number of full-time equivalent students in the district last spring!

I am very proud of the staff who have been partners in developing the college. Their cooperation and support are crucial as we have reorganized their areas, computerized their tasks, moved their offices, and literally remodeled around them. They have given their time generously to help improve the campus' physical appearance and have participated actively in shared governance responsibilities.

I am especially proud of my management team, individuals who have taken on, along with their assigned tasks, many "other duties as assigned" in a professional and conscientious manner: walking the campus daily, serving at college lunches, helping at fundraisers, holding welcome days, and cleaning on Saturdays. We have had fun while developing as a team.

I also acknowledge our students, the only reason we are all here, and their outstanding leaders as partners in moving us closer to our shared vision. In their second year of leadership, the current student government has matured in their advocacy and contribution, shaping legislation in Sacramento, working through the shared governance process to remodel the Student Center, increasing membership by 28%, speaking publicly in support of space utilization and construction plans, and demonstrating to all how to use the decision-making process to effect change responsibly. They earned our nomination at the state level as the "1998 Collaborative Team."

I extend my appreciation to the college's many friends and supporters especially our emeriti, foundation board of directors, and generous donors.

They have contributed time, energy, and money to the new synergy at City College.

The picture we see is one of incremental progress accomplished through mutual support, shared vision, and trust. If there is one thing I am sure, no ONE person runs the institution. It is a TEAM effort, and LACC has a winning team! I applaud and salute each one.

Now let me direct your attention to our future, where we are going. In 1996 at a college retreat to chart the direction for the next five years, *Vision for 2001* was shaped and later ratified by the campus community. It reads:

> *With the commitment and active participation of all the students, staff, faculty, and administrators who make up our progressive and adaptable family, by the year 2001 we will again be an important center of culture and learning in Los Angeles. Working together we will restore the campus, transforming it into a clean, safe, attractive and supportive environment for every student who has the will to learn. We will emerge as a center of educational excellence, with a city-wide reputation for empowering students through innovative academic programs and individualized support services. Our ultimate goal is to shape City College into an energetic and harmonious community that inspires in all of its members a deep appreciation for the new and the different, an abiding spirit of tolerance and mutual respect, and a passion for lifelong learning.*

Yes, this vision is ambitious, but it is also achievable. It is my touchstone for making decisions, planning strategically, and marking our progress as we guide the institution into the next decade and toward its fullest potential.

My energies will continue to focus on several key issues to move the college

into a leadership position at the local, state, and ultimately national levels...

- We will maintain and expand our intellectual strength through our faculty's educational leadership that is identified by quality programs and innovative delivery systems. The roots we share with UCLA demand that quality, and our students deserve no less.
- We will continue to improve the physical environment because that environment influences how we think, work, and view ourselves. We will soon have a new bookstore, Cyber Café, and mailroom to add to our new roofs and some fresh paint; our goals include air conditioning in every classroom, a new building (or 2), a parking structure, paint, and flowers.
- We will end this year free of a deficit and work to establish an endowment to free the college from complete dependence on the state's annual allocation through the activities of our re-energized foundation and development office.
- We will continue to reach beyond the campus's physical boundaries to create a sense of community. The goal is to have Los Angeles City College viewed by those who come here as a resource, a haven, the area's greatest asset. To this end, I have developed mutually respectful relationships with members of the broader community. We now have the support of our elected officials, members of the local chambers and homeowners associations, our middle and high school neighbors, and community and business members. This community will continue to expand.

I recently attended a strategic planning retreat; the participants were asked, "Why are you involved with the LACCD?" I reflected on that thought as each person responded, sifting through my memories and briefly reliving some of the reasons, both mundane and sublime—becoming independent, leaving New York for a new future, looking for a

job, teaching, becoming an administrator. Since then I've given it more serious thought.

I'm here because I believe I can make a difference in our students' lives and can contribute to moving City College closer to its vision. The chance to make a difference spurs me on to find ways to coordinate our strengths and skills, to move the institution ahead during this challenging period.

My parents, who are here to celebrate with me today, early communicated to me the reality that I had the advantage of a close family who valued higher education and sacrificed so I could spend four important years pursuing a liberal arts education. They stressed the importance of education for any path I might choose. They also communicated clearly that in reaching my potential I should use my education and talents to benefit others. City College allows me to be my best self, to continue to learn and develop, to be a leader and decision-maker.

In closing, I want to respond to those who have asked me, "Why do you do what you do? Your job seems an impossible task." My answer is captured by a line in Franz Kafka's short story "The Hunger Artist," a story I used to teach in my former life. The artist, who has fasted for 40 days and nights, is asked why he did what he did. The fans have left him for a newer, more glamorous circus attraction. His response is, "Because I have to fast. I can't help it." Likewise, I do *this* because I can't do otherwise. This district and this college have given me the opportunity to develop my own potential. The German philosopher Goethe expresses well my belief:

> *"Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it.*
> *Boldness has beauty, magic, and power in it."*

I am committed to pursuing the dream and acting boldly to achieve it.

Thank you for your support.

L·A·C·C

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